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Seminar Series on Islam and Democracy

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Martha Olcott

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"State and Society in Central Asia: Revolutions on the Horizon?"

[January](#)

Tuesday, April 12, 2011

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Noon

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Mershon Center for International Security Studies

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1501 Neil Ave., Columbus, OH 43201

[May](#)

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Martha Olcott is a senior associate with the Russia and Eurasia Program at the Carnegie Endowment in Washington, D.C. Olcott is an expert in Central Asia, Russia and Eurasia, the Caspian region, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, ethnicity, terrorism, oil and gas policy, natural resources, democracy, U.S.-Russia relations, foreign and humanitarian aid, and Islam.

Olcott specializes in the problems of transitions in Central Asia and the Caucasus as well as the security challenges in the Caspian region more generally. She has followed interethnic relations in Russia and the states of the former Soviet Union for more than 25 years and has traveled extensively in these countries and in South Asia.

Her book, *Central Asia's Second Chance* (Carnegie Endowment, 2005), examines the economic and political development of this ethnically diverse and strategically vital region in the context of the changing security threats post 9/11. She has also published *Kazakhstan: Unfulfilled Promise* (Carnegie Endowment, 2002); *Preventing New Afghanistans: A Regional Strategy for Reconstruction* (Carnegie Endowment Policy Brief 11, 2001) *Getting It Wrong: Regional Cooperation and the Commonwealth of Independent States*, with Anders Åslund and Sherman Garnett (Carnegie Endowment, 1999); *Russia After Communism* edited with Anders Åslund (Carnegie Endowment, 1999).

In addition to her work in Washington, Olcott codirects the Carnegie



Martha Olcott
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Moscow Center Project on Religion, Society, and Security in the former Soviet Union. She is professor *emerita* at Colgate University, having taught political science there from 1974 to 2002. Olcott served for five years as a director of the Central Asian American Enterprise Fund. Prior to her work at the Carnegie Endowment, Olcott served as a special consultant to former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger.

Olcott received her B.A. from SUNY-Buffalo, and her M.A., Ph.D., from the University of Chicago.

For her talk, Olcott will examine how democratic institutions have been slow to take root in the states of Central Asia, but in recent years only the Kyrgyz have taken to the street in large numbers to oust their rulers. She will examine the questions: What are the prospects of social upheaval in the other countries? Is there strong support for secular democratic ideals? Are religious groups a dominant social force in most countries? Do the models of democratic transition that have been applied in the region for the past 20 years still apply?

This event is co-sponsored by [Honors and Scholars](#), [Department of Political Science](#), [Middle East Studies Center](#), [Mershon Center for International Security Studies](#), [Center for Slavic and East European Studies](#), and [Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures](#).

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